

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Chief, Project Staff

DATE: 18 June 1956

FROM : Records Management Officer

SUBJECT:

1. PROBLEM

To determine additional measures to be taken to achieve economy in records costs for maintenance, space, and equipment through timely disposition of records holdings.

2. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

- a. Incomplete inventory of equipment and records holdings.
- b. Incomplete disposal schedules.
- c. Nonexistence of a uniform policy and procedure for implementing a comprehensive and continuing records management program.
- d. Control of records destroyed locally.
- e. Nonexistence of a procedure for control of new file, series established and expansion of previously reported records holdings.
- f. Control of records management activities within the DD/P area.

3. DISCUSSION

- a. This review was conducted as a follow-up to Notice No. [] Procurement and Use of Filing Equipment. The attached statistical summary was developed as a result of this study and highlights certain factors of the Records Management Program which we feel require further development or rejuvenation.
- b. The salient factor relative to the progress of this program is the need of instructions at the operating level. Procedures are incomplete whereby a complete inventory and systematic appraisal (by operating personnel) of all records could be made in order to determine the final disposition of all agency records. The present system

of having the "Inventory-appraisal" made by the Records Management Staff is time consuming and does not fulfill the requirements of a records management program. It is believed that if procedures were developed in the form of a manual the operating personnel would have documented for him a publication which would be as common in its use as the dictionary. Such inventories and appraisals at the operating level would relieve the Records Analyst of countless clerical details and enable him to review the appraisals and prepare disposal schedules not only for specific programs, but the development of items which would qualify for General Schedules.

- c. The delays encountered^{er} with respect to coordinating the proposed change to CIA Regulation has been detrimental to this phase of Records Management. This is not the crux of our problem but is basic in order to put teeth into effecting our program.
- d. The disposal schedules developed under the present plan of operation are incomplete; not only to the extent that an "inventory appraisal" has not been initiated in some areas but a follow-up would appear in order to clear up some of the inconsistencies. For example, the Security Office appears to have an excessive amount of permanent records in comparison to the total records holdings. It also appears strange that the record does not reflect library material for Medical. (A survey completed April 1956 reflected 49 ft. of library material). In some instances, such as OHR, schedules have been developed and not placed into effect. Such unfortunate actions on the part of this element render this schedule inactive due to the fact 10 months have elapsed since its completion. Again, this serves to highlight the indifferent attitude towards the Records Management Program in the Agency. The writer would be remiss if the direct effect such actions have had on the morale of the records disposition people were not brought to your attention. Further reference is made to the attached chart with respect to retirement activity. The majority of such elements are not assuming the responsibilities delegated to them and have been negligent in retiring records to the Records Center. With the exception of one area reports are not made to the Records Disposition Branch to record the records that have been disposed of locally. Under this system a periodic re-inventory is necessary to bring the schedule up to date.

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This situation is true with respect to new file series that are created after a schedule has been developed. It would appear that retirement activity is increased only at that time when more space is required.

- e. I'm sure that it is recognized that the above facts render appraisal of requisitions for filing equipment practically impossible without first making a physical check of the records and equipment in the requesting office.
- f. The independency of Records Management activities within the DD/P area has made it impossible to evaluate their progress. It should be noted this activity has retired a high percent of its reported records. This is nothing to shout about in view of the incompleteness of the record, and is misleading since this retirement activity resulted from overseas records and does not represent headquarters activity. It appears that before our Records Management Program reaches the objectives as intended in the Federal Records Act of 1950 there must be a command decision as to "who's running the show". Our position is not improving, it has been the writer's observation, in the FE area, that we are being undermined to the extent that the DD/P program is being promoted as an autonomous one. This method of management control is unique to say the least.
- g. An attempt was made to arrive at a numerical rating which would indicate the degree to which an office had "disposed - retired" of its records holdings. A percentage rating has been given in those instances where a schedule had been approved. It is based on the total of the records identified as permanent or temporary that have been retired, as compared with the total holdings. It is recognized this figure does not necessarily represent the total activity since reports of records disposed of locally are not available. Comparisons developed as the result of schedules completed in '53 and '54 do not carry much weight either, due to the "additions - deletions" that would have occurred since they were approved. Such inconsistencies will continue until reports of additions and deletions of each specific file series are reported to Records Management.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- a. The discontinuance of reviewing requisitions for filing equipment presents an unfavorable situation with respect to control in light of the unsatisfactory control we

presently have on "disposition-retirement" of records. Such disposal activity dictates a periodic check of records holdings to determine compliance with Notice

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- b. The "inventory-appraisal" system now employed is ineffective and is a withdrawal from the functional responsibilities of the Records Disposition Branch.
- c. The record does not accurately reflect the complete records holdings for the Agency.
- d. The inventory and appraisal of records within the Agency is incomplete. Approved disposal schedules have not been consolidated and published in bulletin form.
- e. A uniform policy and procedure for implementing a comprehensive and continuing records management program has not been published.
- f. Disposal schedules are not fully utilized.
- g. Reports of records disposed of locally are incomplete.
- h. New file series established are not reported to the Records Disposition Branch.
- i. The Records Management Program in the DD/P is operating independently of the Agency program and is one in which we exercise little control.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. That coordination of the revision to CIA Regulation which sets forth the policy of the Records Management Program, be assigned as a project to a member of the Records Management Staff.
- b. The proposed Records Disposition Handbook be revised, coordination difficulties absolved and published. Such revision should include provisions for reporting to the Records Disposition Branch all new file series created and an annual inventory and notification to RDB of those file series that have increased 10% or more in volume.
- c. Discontinue the present "inventory-appraisal" system and initiate the system discussed in 3b above.

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- d. Realign the functional responsibilities of the Records Analyst in the Records Disposition Branch to function as staff officials.
- e. Establish a follow-up procedure for control of retirement and disposition of records in accordance with established schedules.
- f. Publish and maintain a consolidated disposal bulletin.
- g. That DD/P comply with the Records Management Program as directed by the Records Management Staff. That an annual survey be conducted by this staff to assure compliance.
- h. Review of filing equipment be continued on a spot check basis until the above recommendations have been placed into effect.

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